

Nehemiah 8:1-10

“It’s Time to Celebrate!”

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:1-10

Memory Verse: Nehemiah 8:10b *“Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”*

Lesson Focus: The city is now rebuilt and as our memory verse says, the people were instructed not to weep but to CELEBRATE what God has done for them. We will in like fashion remind the kids what God has done for them and encourage them to remember Him and enter into their week with joy and CELEBRATION.

Activities and Crafts: Ezra Teaching Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring it Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: Party Hat

Starter Activity: Pin the Last Brick on the Wall

Consider starting out the lesson by playing an imitation of “pin the tail on the donkey” that we will call “Pin the Last Brick on the Wall”.

Teachers: We will provide you with a “wall” that you can use with a target to place the last brick, a blindfold, and a “brick” for this game. Just pick a handful of kids who want to play, blindfold them one-by-one, spin them around, and then have them try to put the last brick on the wall. Consider awarding the winner with a prize. Then see some Qs below you can use to transition into the lesson.

Q: Where do you usually play games like “pin the tail on the donkey”?

A: At parties where you are CELEBRATE something!

Q: What are some examples of events that you might CELEBRATE?

A: Christmas, Easter, 4th of July

Notice that in all of these events, you are REMEMBERING something that happened.

Q: What do you remember when you celebrate Christmas? A: Birth of Jesus

Q: What do you remember when you celebrate Easter? A: Death and resurrection of Jesus

In our chapter of Nehemiah, the people are remembering and CELEBRATING as well!

Q: What do you think they are CELEBRATING? A: God helping them restore the city of Jerusalem so that they could now dwell in it again! Let’s take a look at how they CELEBRATED.

Bible Study:

Nehemiah 8:1a: Now that the city of Jerusalem has been restored, the people are all gathering together publicly.

Q: Can you think of places today (before Covid) where large crowds of people gather? *

A: Sports games, Parades, Concerts, In-n-Out Drive-Thru, etc.

In the same way, there were thousands of God's people gathered at this open square. But look at what happens next!

Nehemiah 8:1b: They ask this dude Ezra to come and bring the word of God! Imagine our Super Bowl Halftime show today featuring a dude that reads from the Bible!

This is the first time we hear about this Ezra dude so we need to talk about him a little bit.

* Just as the book of Ezra and the book of Nehemiah go hand-in-hand in the Bible, these two guys were a **dynamic duo** working hand-in-hand for God during this time.

(Teachers: Consider playing a quick game with the kids listing out characters from various dynamic duos, but only list one and have them guess the second. Examples: Mario & Luigi, Elsa & Anna, Han Solo & Chewy, R2D2 & C3PO, Chip & Dale, etc.)

Dynamic duos are always mightier when they work together. We've learned about how Nehemiah was a godly leader and inspired the people to have courage and rebuild God's city in the face of danger. But at the same time God was also using Ezra as a godly teacher, instructing the people about God that they would love Him and follow Him.

Read **Ezra 7:10**. Ezra was a Bible expert! While Nehemiah gave godly leadership over the people's **hands** in rebuilding of the city, Ezra gave godly leadership over the people's **hearts** that they would do the work by faith!

Nehemiah 8:2-3: So, Ezra opens the Bible (the book of the Law) and begins reading the very first verse of the Bible before all of these thousands of people. Let's look what happened here as this is pretty extraordinary.

Q: Who did he read it to? A: Men, women, AND CHILDREN LIKE YOU old enough to understand! These were whole families!

Q: How long did he read? A: From morning until mid-day! That is like 4-6 hours!

Q: Did the people want to listen? A: Yes! Their ears were attentive!

This means that men, women, and kids WANTED to learn more and more about God!

Q: Can you think of anything that you WANT to do for 4-6 hours?

This might sound amazing to you, but remember what has just happened: God has kept His promises to restore them to their land (**Jeremiah 29:10-14**) and the people are excited and eager to thank Him, worship Him, and CELEBRATE what He has done. *

Nehemiah 8:4-6: So as Ezra was reading he also instructed the people to respond. (**Teachers:** Consider acting these verses out with the kids. Get some chairs to have you and a couple of helpers to stand on so that you are “above” the people (v. 4), then have all of the kids stand up when you (or a volunteer) open the Bible and read **Deuteronomy 6:4-6** (v. 5), then have all of the kids say “Amen, Amen” with their hands lifted up (v. 6). Finally, get on your knees and bow before God.

Q: What does “Amen” mean? A: It means “I agree” or “So be it”. The people were shouting their agreement to trust in God and obey His word! *

Nehemiah 8:7-8: Now these other guys are going out and answering questions and helping the people understand the God’s Word. This is the ULTIMATE Bible Study! *

Q: Do you kids know what an owner’s manual is? A: It is a book that shows you how something works. (**Teachers:** Consider bringing the owner’s manual of your vehicle to demonstrate this). A car has an owner’s manual that tells you how to properly operate the car. Q: Who wrote this manual? A: The **designer** of the car. They know the car better than anyone!

In the same way, the Bible is our owner’s manual for life! God designed our world and has told us how we ought to live. These people are ready to learn and we should be too!

Nehemiah 8:9: Now we see something a little surprising. This is a day of CELEBRATION, yet we have the **dynamic duo** instructing the people not to cry?

Q: Why might they be crying as they hear God’s word? A: Because the people have seen how badly they have broken God’s word. They have ignored the owner’s manual! Being convicted of their sin they realize they don’t deserve God’s blessing.

Nehemiah 8:10: But God says it is not time to weep, but time to rejoice and feast! For they have come back to Him in faith and trust and it was to time to CELEBRATE with food and fun! *

Key Point: We may experience something similar when we CELEBRATE Good Friday.

Q: Who knows what happened on Good Friday? A: Jesus died on the cross for our sins.

Q: Whose sin? A: Our sin! This should humble us as we remember our crimes * put Jesus on the cross. But at the same time we rejoice in God’s love and grace in forgiving us!

Q: And then what do we CELEBRATE the following Sunday? A: The resurrection!! Jesus’s victory over sin and death that He shares with everyone who believe in Him.

Give Him thanks every day for His grace toward you! May the joy of the Lord be your strength. But also, just like these people, know the owner’s manual and give God your “double AMEN” by trusting and obeying! (**Teachers:** We will have candy for you to give to the kids to “celebrate” with)

Bring It Home

Download at: <https://rmcalvary.org/volunteering/childrens-ministry/family-resources/>

Lesson Theme: “It’s Time To Celebrate!”

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:1-10

Memory Verse: Nehemiah 8:10b *“Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”*

Teachers/Parents: We got our lesson started by talking about various holidays and the reasons why we celebrate those holidays. What are some of your favorite holidays and why do you like them?

Discussion Questions:

- 1) In **Nehemiah 8:1**, we are introduced to Ezra for the first time in the book. What we learn from the book of Ezra is that God was using Ezra as a spiritual leader during all of the events of Nehemiah. Read **Ezra 7:10**. What three things describe Ezra in this verse? Do any of these describe you? Why or why not?
- 2) In class we talked about how Ezra and Nehemiah were a **dynamic duo** during this time of biblical history. Ezra was appointed to be the spiritual leader while Nehemiah was appointed to be the political leader. Together they brought about revival in Israel. Can you think of any other dynamic duos in the Bible? Read **Exodus 7:5-7** for one example.
- 3) Read **Luke 10:1-2**. How did Jesus send His disciples out? Why do you think that He did it this way?
- 4) Read **Nehemiah 8:2-3**. What did the people do for several hours? Notice that even children (in certain Bible translations) are mentioned as participating here. What do you think was happening in the hearts of the people to be able to listen and learn so attentively for so long?
- 5) Read **Nehemiah 8:9**. After hearing the word of God spoken and explained to them, it says the people began to weep. Why do you think they responded like this? **Parents:** Consider sharing with your kids examples when God’s Word has brought you to tears.
- 6) In **Nehemiah 8:10**, what were the people told to do? What are some ways that you can CELEBRATE God’s grace and lovingkindness to you this week?